

Remarks

Claim 17, 23, 27, 28, and 30 through 32 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Reich '853. Claims 18, 19, 22, and 29 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reich '853 in view of Bateman '211. Claim 24 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reich '853 and Bateman '211 in view of Stam '815. Claim 26 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reich '853 in view of Stam '559. Claims 33 through 38 and 43 through 45 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bateman '211 in view of Wittmer DE '170. Claim 39 and 46 through 48 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bateman '211 and Wittmer DE '170 in further view of Reich '853. Claim 40 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Batemen '211 and Wittmer DE '170 in further view of Stam '815. Claim 42 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bateman '211 and Wittmer DE '170 in further view of Stam '559.

The Examiner has, however, indicated that claims 20, 21, 25, and 41 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In response thereto, the Applicant has amended claim 17 to include the limitations of allowable claim 20. Claim 17 is therefore allowable. Claim 20 has accordingly been cancelled. Claims 18 through 27 are now dependent upon allowable claim 17 and therefore similarly allowable. Method claim 28 recites limitations corresponding to the structural limitations of claim

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17. The Applicant has therefore amended claim 28 to incorporate the limitations of allowable claim 20 therefore rendering claim 28 allowable. Claims 29 through 32 inherit the limitations of allowable claim 28 and are therefore similarly allowable. Claim 33 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of allowable claim 41 and intermediate claims 40 and 34 and is therefore allowable in its amended form. As a result thereof claims 34, 40, and 41 have been cancelled. Claims 35 through 39, 42 and 43 are dependent upon allowable claim 33 and are therefore similarly allowable.

Method claim 44 recites method steps corresponding to the structural limitations of claim 33. In consequence thereof, claim 44 has been amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 41 and intermediate claims 40 and 34, thereby reciting a method claim having a scope equivalent to that of allowable apparatus claim 33, as amended. Claims 45 through 48 are dependent upon allowable claim 44 and are therefore similarly allowable.

The Applicant believes this communication to be fully responsive to all remaining issues in this case and to place the case into a position of allowance. The Examiner is therefore respectfully requested to pass this case on to issuance of a United States patent.

No new matter has been added in this amendment.

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